

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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ABC Decoy Tries to Buy Alcohol at 19 Palm Springs Restaurant/Bar Locations and None Sell

Palm Springs - (ABC) conducted a minor decoy operation on Wednesday, October 17, 2007 in the city of Palm Springs and did not cite a single person or business. The decoy attempted to purchase alcohol at 19 different on-sale licensed restaurant/bar businesses as part of a compliance check operation. ABC conducts these decoy operations consistently throughout California. The operation includes a minor under the direct supervision of ABC investigators, who attempts to purchase alcohol from licensees.

Those who sell to a minor face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the locations' alcoholic beverage license. That may include a fine, a suspension of the license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the State since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is approximately 20 percent.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Dale E. Bonner, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.